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CONTINGENCY PLANNING -- PEOPLES TEMPLE SITUATION

1989

Preface

If reports now coming out of Guyana confirm that upwards of hundreds of people at Jonestown Peoples Temple Agricultural Community have committed suicide and many others have fled to the nearby Guyanese communities of Port Kaituma and Matthews Ridge then the following considerations must be made.

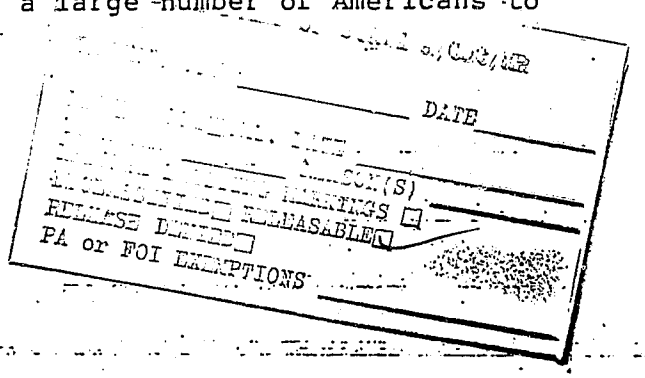
1. Caring and feeding of survivors by Embassy until eventual repatriation.

a. emergency assistance by the Department SCS in making funds available for repatriation loans.

b. notification of next-of-kin to provide financial assistance and/or meet and assist upon arrival.

2. Transportation of Repatriatees.

a. transportation of repatriatees first from Port Kaituma/Matthews Ridge and then Georgetown to the U.S. (military may assist on this). At present the only transportation to the U.S. is provided by Pan Am four times weekly betweeen Georgetown and New York and Surinamese Airways (DC-9) six times weekly between Georgetown and Miami. Both airlines are usually heavily booked so that it would be extremely difficult to quickly move a large number of Americans to to the U.S.



b. It might be feasible to have a C-130 aircraft transport the repatriatees from Matthews Ridge for departure processing in Georgetown and thence on to the U.S. to a designated repatriation center. From this location arrangements could be made through HEW or relatives for onward transportation to their final destination.

3. Disposition of remains of deceased members.

To assist the Embassy with the problem of a team consisting of members of CA, SCS, military will be required to go to Georgetown to assist in the identification of the large number of deaths that could total as high as 1000 if this large mass suicide pact has in fact taken place. Arrangements will have to be made for either local burial or eventual transportation of remains to the U.S. The latter may not be feasible depending on the state of the remains (Jonestown is in the tropical zone and obviously remains would tend to decompose rapidly). Therefore some arrangement will have to be made concerning local burial. The Embassy will require additional personnel such as consular, administrative, and public affairs to handle details.

4. Washington Team/Reception Center should be formed at the Department from ARA/CAR, ARA/P, and CA to coordinate flow of information to handle all inquiries at the Department

level. Additionally, if military aircraft could be arranged to handle repatriatees then a reception center should be set up to process returning Americans quickly and efficiently. This center should also be staffed by individuals from CA ARA/P and HEW, and of course, military to handle inquiries from relatives and the press about the well-being and health of their relatives as well as handling other necessary administrative details.

5. Personnel Requirements

a. In formulating our planning for this exercise, it must must be kept in mind that the ability of the Government of Guyana to deal with a situation of this magnitude is severely limited both because of the isolation of the area and the lack of facilities at their disposal. It should also be noted that our Embassy in Georgetown has a limited staff that is already heavily taxed because of the CODEL Ryan incident and it would be unable to cope with large numbers of repatriatees, and dead Americans. It is estimated that if there are hundreds of deceased Americans then a military dispatched team with a minimum of five Department officers should be inmmediately dispatched to the area to begin their task of identifying and arranging for disposal of the deceased.

Further, if it is determined that a substantial number of Americans, are in need of assistance in returning to the U.S. (which most of them will) arrangements must be made for their speedy return keeping in mind the anxiety of their relatives in the U.S. A minimum of two Department officers would be required to assist the Embassy in this endeavor. The staffing in the U.S. would be determined by the number of those returning. In any event decisions must be taken at this time to begin to identify those personnel who will need to move immediately when confirmation is received that there are hundreds of Americans dead or in need of assistance.